

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-10. (Canceled)

11. (New) A starter for cranking an internal combustion engine having a ring gear, the starter comprising:

an electric motor;

an output shaft driven by the electric motor;

a magnetic switch for driving a plunger by magnetic force generated therein, electric power supply to the electric motor being controlled in an on-and-off fashion in response to movement of the plunger;

a pinion gear movable in an axial direction of the starter;

a pinion-rotation-restricting member adapted to engage with the pinion gear to restrict rotation of the pinion gear; and

a crank bar driven by the plunger for bringing the pinion-rotation-restricting member into engagement with the pinion gear, thereby thrusting the pinion gear in the axial direction toward the ring gear of the internal combustion engine and establishing engagement between the pinion gear and the ring gear, wherein:

the crank bar is composed of a first portion and a second portion, formed separately from each other, the first portion consisting of a rod portion extending in the axial direction of the starter and an operating portion being bent from the rod portion and contacting the pinion-rotation-restricting member, the second portion consisting of a coupling portion coupled to the plunger of the magnetic switch; and

the first portion and the second portion are made of respectively different materials.

12. (New) The starter as in claim 1, wherein:
the coupling portion is hardened by heat treatment to provide abrasion durability.
13. (New) The starter as in claim 1, wherein:
the first portion and the second portion have respectively different cross-sections.